

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

SECTION

No. D 5390
2 Shalib, T

Date November 6, 1934

REPORT

D

Subject (in full)..... V. A. Yakhontoff, author of the book entitled "The Chinese Soviets".

Made by D.S.I. Prokofiev. Forwarded by J.S. R. A.L.

With reference to the endorsement of the Deputy Commissioner (Special Branch) on the attached copy of "THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE" dated November 1, 1934, I have to state that V.A. Yakhontoff, author of the book, reference to which is made in the article entitled "Fiction about Communism" appearing in the above mentioned publication, forms the subject of file D-5390 in connection with his pro-Soviet leanings.

The book in question entitled "The Chinese Soviets" is on sale at the Chinese American Publishing Co., 78 Nanking Road, where another book by the same author, entitled "Russia and the Soviet Union in the Far East", is also available.

A. Prokofiev

D.S.I.

Deputy Commissioner,

Special Branch.

File
J.S.R.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

No. D.

SECTION

N 2 ~~Kalponi~~
Date: / /

Date November 1, 1933

Subject (in full) Departure of V.A. Yakhontoff, Alleged Soviet Agent.

Made by D.S. Prokofiev

Forwarded by

V.A. Yakhontoff, who forms the subject of file D.5390, left Shanghai for Seattle on October 31, 1933 by the s.s. "President Jefferson".

A. Pirokojia

D.S.

Officer i/c Special Branch.

Mr. Gao

Please send a further note what's named

Copies of both reports sent to

Mean slope, N.E. by E. early.

Capt. Secker, Lieut. Comdr. Hopkinson

to Chinese authorities

J.J. Yao
3/11/12

File #

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

REPORT

Special Branch S.2. 6/4/33

Date October 31, 1933.

Subject (in full) V. A. Yakhontoff, alleged Soviet agent.

Made by D.S. Prokofiev

Forwarded by O.S.O. Bureau

With reference to the attached translation of article from the "Mainichi" dated October 28, 1933, on the subject of a Russian named "Yapon Koff," who is alleged to be a Soviet agent, I have to state that the article evidently refers to V.A. Yakhontoff who arrived in Shanghai from Harbin on September 27, 1933. He stayed at the Astor House until October 19 when he left for Japan by the s.s. "Nagasaki Maru." On October 24 he returned in the s.s. "Asama Maru" and is at present residing at the Astor House, Room 515.

Particulars of this individual, as known to this office, are as follows :-

Victor Alexeevitch Yakhontoff, Russian, 52 years of age, native of Warsaw. He holds passport No. 4967 issued by the German Consulate-General at New York on June 3, 1933 which bears a visa issued by the Chinese Consulate-General at that city on June 28, 1933. In explanation of his national status he stated that he was a former Russian, and that he was very soon to become a naturalized citizen of the U.S.A., having already taken out his first papers. He gave his address as No. 552 Riverside Drive, New York, and his profession as that of a "lecturer and writer on foreign affairs." Further he stated that the object in his coming to Shanghai was "to see several members of the China Institute of Pacific Relations" and mentioned Messrs. L.T. Chen and Liu Yu Wan of the said Institute as references.

Following Yakhontoff's return from Japan on October 24, rumours spread in Shanghai to the effect that he had been refused permission to land in Japan on the ground that he was a Soviet agent. The rumours culminated in the publishing by the "Mainichi" on October 28, of the article above referred to. The article was

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

REPORT

Station, _____
Date 19

Subject (in full) _____

- 2 -

Made by _____

Forwarded by _____

followed by Yakhontoff's letter to the Editor of the "China Press" which appeared on October 29 (copy attached).

During the early part of current month a lengthy article which had appeared in the "Harbin Times," a Japanese semi-official newspaper published in the Russian language in Harbin, was reprinted by the local Russian newspaper "Slovo." It appears from the article that Yakhontoff arrived at the Manchuli Station from the U.S.S.R. on September 17. An examination of his luggage by the customs and police officers revealed a quantity of Soviet publications which were banned in Manchukuo. The literature was confiscated. The fact that Yakhontoff, formerly a general in the Russian Army, had travelled unmolested through the U.S.S.R. on a passport issued by the German Consulate at New York, was also much commented upon. In this connection, according to "Harbin Times", it is mentioned that Yakhontoff took part in the preparation of the revolution in Russia in February 1917, on instruction of certain American circles, and that for this purpose he joined the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party. Under Kerensky's regime he made a rapid career and was promoted to the rank of general. Following the Bolshevik revolution in October 1917 he was taken prisoner by the Red Army, but managed to escape death, and with the permission of the Soviet government left the U.S.S.R. for America via Vladivostock. While in America he resided in New York where he organized conferences on Russian affairs. During the first period of his activity he did not openly express his pro-Soviet attitude owing to the hostile feeling which existed in America against the U.S.S.R. at that time. From America he visited Berlin on several occasions where he was in touch with certain circles connected with Moscow. In Berlin he was involved in an

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

REPORT

Station,

Date 19

Subject (in full)

- 3 -

Made by

Forwarded by

obscure affair in connection with Soviet counterfeit banknotes, as a result of which he had to leave Germany. He returned to America and soon became known there as the author of books on foreign affairs, a lecturer in colleges and a collaborator of the Political Research Institute in New York. His books, ostensibly of non-communist nature, contained a subtle propaganda of Soviet ideas. The popularization of the Soviet Five Years Plan in the American business circles was one of the services he rendered to the U.S.S.R. He published a number of books on the "proletarian" country, eulogising, under the mask of impartiality, the much discussed "achievements" of the Soviet Government in the U.S.S.R. The fact that a "Tsarist general" praised the Soviet regime strongly impressed the American society and facilitated the propaganda conducted by the Soviet Trade Mission in 1930-1931. The naive Americans did not know that all data for his books and lectures Yakhontoff received direct from Skvirsky, Soviet representative in America, with whom he was connected. In this manner Yakhontoff became prominent as a responsible worker of the pro-Soviet group in America, which includes Senator Bora, Abel Jenkins and others,^{and} the activity of which is directed towards the support of the U.S.S.R. Yakhontoff claims to have been charged by a certain publishing company with the task of collecting materials relating to the Soviet movement in China. It would be logical for him to go to China in order to accomplish his task. Instead, he went to the U.S.S.R. where he remained for some considerable time and where he received a large quantity of the Soviet publications. It is said that in Moscow, apart from collecting materials relating to the Soviet movement in China, he was in touch with the Red General Staff, of which he is a member.

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL POLICE.

REPORT

Station,

Date 19

Subject (in full)

- 4 -

Made by

Forwarded by

in addition to his duties in America.

Yakhontoff's letter to the Editor of the "China Press", apart from allegations regarding the inquisitiveness of the Japanese police and their "White Russian collaborators", which may or may not be true, contains corroboration of the above report of the "Harbin Times" regarding his revolutionary career and the circumstances under which he arrived at the Manchuli Station. At the same time it does not explain the circumstances under which he left Russia following the Bolshevik revolution, and how it was possible for a former general of the Russian army, who is an emigrant, not only to travel unmolested through the U.S.S.R., but to be allowed to conduct a party of English and American tourists in that country. It would seem that the Soviet government has a certain amount of confidence in Yakhontoff and that, therefore, the Japanese police had good reasons for their distrust towards this individual.

According to our information Yakhontoff intends to leave Shanghai for the United States within a few days.

A. Prokof'ev

D. S.

Officer i/c Special Branch.

Encl
1/11.

JPL

1928

JAPANESE · INQUISITION

Editor, THE CHINA PRESS

Dear Sir:—May I ask you kindly to give space in your paper for the following:

Today I learned through several parties, (including some mysterious voices over the telephone, advising me to write this) that in one of the local Japanese papers appeared a note to the effect that former Russian general V.A. Yakhotoff was deported from Japan for being a Soviet agent etc. "I have not seen myself this insinuation, but even without it there is ample reason to protest and apply to the public opinion about the activities of certain Japanese and their hirelings, as one can see from the following:

The undersigned, formerly a general in the Russian army, Military Attaché at the Imperial Russian Embassy at Tokyo, and then Assistant Secretary of War in the Kerensky Cabinet, now for more than 15 years is living in the U.S.A., where he is lecturing on the Far East, and writing. His latest book "Russia and the Soviet Union in the Far East" published in New York and in London, was almost with no exception proclaimed as very fair and impartial expose of a rather involved topic.

Last July I sailed from New York with a group of Americans via England to the U.S.S.R., and conducted that tour in order to pay my way to Moscow, where I wanted to gather material for the new book, which I am commissioned to write by my publishers, namely on the Soviet movement in China. From Moscow I went by the Trans-Siberian to the Orient to continue accumulation of the material required for that book.

On my arrival to Manchuria my baggage was examined with an unusual severity (by the Russians employed at that custom-house), who, apparently dis-approved my going to U.S.S.R.) and the books printed in U.S.S.R. and all on Communism Sovietism and related subjects in English and other languages, were declared confiscated as "not allowed for import to Manchukuo," in spite of my request to send them "in bond" directly to Peiping for I did not intend to stay in Manchukuo at all. Fortunately I had with me a letter from the Japanese Consul-General at New York to the all-

Schack Japanese Cons
Sugimura Gar
Dr. Verner Sngm
Shop

passports no Japanese visa is required). But this was not the point: there was something else they wanted to find out; they undoubtedly came to examine me, not the passengers in general. Of course they knew who I was, what was my attitude towards the Japanese aggression in China, as expressed in my lectures all over the U.S.A., but apparently, they were informed by the White-Russian collaborators that "because I visited U.S.S.R. I must be a Soviet agent;" there are people who explain everything in terms of gold! Anyhow the rest of the voyage was a real inquisition: I was asked all sort of questions, mostly irrelevant, and advised that "it would be much better if I would join the White movement!" The agent also made me understand that, being a "man without a country," I was at the mercy of the Japanese police! Quite cheering! Knowing what is the Japanese respect to the International law, one could expect anything.

On the arrival to Kobe I was advised that the authorities there considered that I could proceed to Yokohama, but they wanted confirmation of that by still higher authorities. In about two hours I was informed that I can land and go by rail to Yokohama. Now was my turn to ask for documentation. No, they were not able to give me any paper, this being not customary. Then, I said, I cannot land for who can guarantee that I will have no more recurrences of the experience I underwent while on the boat, and which was on the border of torture, very polite, of course, but irritating and annoying to the limit.

Besides, the agent of the N.Y.K. Line, who came to meet me, declared that all of my baggage had to be examined, which was against the written promise of their Shanghai Office, which induced me not to go by the Empress of Asia, as I wanted in order to avoid the red-tape of Japan, and they succeeded in it by including my transportation by rail and hotel expenses, while waiting the boat for America, in the price of the ticket, and expressly undertaking to send my heavy baggage "in bond" directly to that boat at Yokohama. Considering that the change was due to the "curiosity" of the police, and preferring not to repeat the experience of Manchuli, I took the impression that he was in a position to open a letter I was drawing a blank in the same room before he was in a position to do so.

CASTRIES, N.S.W.—(Reuter Mail)—Apparently a thief broke in, was confronted with police, but in the dark hours of a windy night, beat a hasty retreat.

Protester Gets Grim Shock

5390.

30.10.1933

Newspaper Translations of October 28, 1933

STRANGE RUSSIAN RETURNS TO SHANGAI

A Russian named Vapon Koff, 52, who was a cavalry officer in the time of the Russian Empire, came to Shanghai some time ago and was collecting secret informations by employing a number of informers. He stayed at the Astor House. A few days ago he suddenly left for Japan. He is of Russian origin and a naturalized German. He is in possession of a German passport issued two years ago but the passport has now expired.

Suspicion was aroused owing to his strange activities when staying at the Astor House and the Japanese Consular authorities sent a telegram to the Kobe Water Police instructing them to make an investigation. Acting upon these instructions, the Kobe Water Police made a search of articles belonging to him and found a quantity of inflammatory documents. Consequently he was not permitted to disembark. He returned to Shanghai on October 24 by the S.S. Asama Maru. He is reported to be a communist.

NICHI-NICHI.

OVER ONE THOUSAND RUSSIANS LEAVE HARBIN

A telegram from Harbin dated Oct. 27 reports that during August and September about 700 White Russians and 400 Soviet Russians have left Harbin due to the rumour of Russo-Japanese war. About 40 Russians are leaving Harbin every day.

\$2

for comment please

MR

OCT. 29 1933

D. Pirogov

30/10/33

No. D 5390

Morning Translation 33

October 28, 1933.

MISCELLANEOUS

MAINICHI

STRANGE RUSSIAN RETURNS TO SHANGHAI

A Russian named Yapon Koff, 52, who was a cavalry officer in the time of the Russian Empire, came to Shanghai some time ago and was collecting secret information by employing a number of informers. He stayed at the Astor House. A few days ago he suddenly left for Japan. He is of Russian origin and a naturalized German. He is in possession of a German passport issued two years ago but the passport has now expired.

Suspicion was aroused owing to his strange activities when staying at the Astor House and the Japanese Consular authorities sent a telegram to the Kobe Water Police instructing them to make an investigation. Acting upon these instructions, the Kobe Water Police made a search of articles belonging to him and found a quantity of inflammatory documents. Consequently he was not permitted to disembark. He returned to Shanghai on October 24 by the S.S. Asama Maru. He is reported to be a communist.

YAKHONTOFF, Victor Alexeevitch

Author of "The Chinese Soviets".

Address: No. 552 Riverside Drive, New York.

Came to Shanghai "to see several members of the China
Institute of Pacific Relations"

Was collaborator of the Political Research Institute in New York.

Aided Soviet Trade Mission in 1930-1931.

SMP

SMP: No. D 5390
7 Nov. 1934

SKVIRSKY

Soviet representative in America.

KOFF, Yapon - Soviet